

**Claims**

1. A sampling device characterised by a male portion comprising a male base portion and a sample removal means, and a female portion comprising a first female base portion and a sample container, the sample removal means being removably located on the male base portion and the sample container being removably located at least in part within the first female base portion, wherein as the male and female portions are brought together the sample removal means collects a biological sample from an animal being tagged, is received through the first female base portion, and lodges in the sample container, this action in turn introducing the sample to a sample receiving space within the sample container, pushing the sample container from the first female base portion, and sealing the sample receiving space, the sample removal means being provided with an amount of sample preparative or preservative that is available to the sample within the sample receiving space.  
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- 15 2. A sampling device according to claim 1, characterised in that the male base portion comprises a base and an upstanding member, the upstanding member having provided thereon an annular lip such that the lip prevents the male portion being pulled from the first female base portion once received therein.
- 20 3. A sampling device according to claim 2, characterised in that the sample removal means is adapted to be positively located on the upstanding member prior to the connection of the male and female portions.
- 25 4. A sampling device according to claim 3, characterised in that the sample removal means comprises a generally cylindrical cutter means and a thrust member the cutter means having an open upper end provided with a cutting edge to facilitate penetration of animal tissue, the thrust member is received within a bore of the cutter means and has a seat member provided therein to seat the upstanding member.
5. A sampling device according to claim 4, characterised in that the thrust member further defines therein a chamber adjacent the open upper end of the

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cutter means such that the biological sample obtained thereby presses into the chamber.

6. A sampling device according to claim 5, characterised in that the sample preparative or preservative is provided in substantially granular form, the chamber having provided thereover a sheet of porous material so as to retain the preparative or preservative therein whilst allowing it to function with respect to the sample ultimately retained within the sample container.  
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7. A sampling device according to any one of claims 4 to 6, characterised in that the thrust member engages the cutter means within the bore thereof such that thrust imparted to the thrust member is passed to the cutter means.  
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8. A sampling device according to any one of claims 4 to 7, characterised in that the cutter means is tapered from lower end to upper end, thereby facilitating its passage into the female portion of the sample device and its retention within the sample container.
- 15 9. A sampling device according to any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that the sample container is tapered such that it is broader at an open lower end thereof than it is at an upper end thereof, the lower end being received within the first female base portion before the male and female portions are brought together.
- 20 10. A sampling device according to any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that the first female base portion comprises a base member, in which is provided a frangible portion through which the male portion may be received and retained in part, and an upstanding collar, the upstanding collar is spaced radially apart from the aperture and is adapted to receive thereon a cap.
- 25 11. A sampling device according to claim 10, characterised in that the open lower end of the sample container is releasably retained within the upstanding collar of the first female base portion by the cap, whereby the sample container is received through an aperture provided in the cap and as the sample removal

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means is received in the open lower end of the sample container and pushed as the male and female portions are brought together, the sample container and sample removal means detach from their respective portions leaving the remainder thereof positively engaged.

- 5    12. A sampling device according to claim 10 or 11, characterised in that a ring of  
resilient material is captured within the upstanding collar and cap, the ring  
being of broader dimension than the aperture in the base member of the first  
female base portion and the aperture in the cap, whereby the ring is pushed  
upwardly by the annular lip of the upstanding member as the male and female  
10    portions are brought together, such that an attempt to tamper with the  
upstanding member should be visible.
13. A sampling device according to any one of the preceding claims characterised  
in that the sampling device further comprises a transponder.
14. A sampling device according to claim 13, characterised in that the transponder  
15    is provided as a separate member closely associated with the base member of  
the first female base portion, the transponder having provided therein an  
aperture to cooperate with the aperture provided in the first female base  
portion.
15. A sampling device according to claim 14, characterised in that a second  
20    female base portion is provided to sandwich the transponder between it and  
the first female base portion, the second female base portion having an  
aperture provided therein to cooperate with the aperture of the transponder  
and the frangible portion of the first female base portion.
16. A sampling device according to anyone of the preceding claims, characterised  
25    in that both the male portion and female portion have a matching or otherwise  
coordinated identification means provided thereon, the identification means  
being such that it will be evident should an attempt be made to obscure,  
obliterate or remove the identification.

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17. A sampling device according to claim 16, characterised in that an identification means is provided on each of the first female base portion, the sample container and the male base portion.

18. A sampling device characterised by a male portion comprising a base and an upstanding member, and a female portion comprising a first female base portion, the upstanding member having an annular lip arranged to be retained within the female portion when the male and female portions are brought together, the first female base portion further comprising an upstanding collar and cap, the cap having provided therein an aperture, whereby the annular lip of the upstanding member is retained within the collar and cap together with a resilient ring, the resilient ring preventing at least partially any attempt to interfere with the upstanding member and thereby separate the male and female portions.

19. A sampling device and tagging system characterised in that it includes as basic components a male portion comprising a base and upstanding member, and a female portion comprising a first female base portion, cap and a resilient ring retained thereby, wherein as the male and female portions are brought together the upstanding member is received through or in the first female base portion in a positive and generally unreleasable manner, the resilient ring and cap being arranged so as to prevent any undetectable interference with the upstanding member in an effort to release the male and female portions, the system allowing for the addition of one or more transponders for electronic identification purposes, and the use of sampling components.

20. A sampling device and tagging system according to claim 19 characterised in that the sampling components comprise a sample removal means and a sample container, the sample removal means being releasably located on the upstanding member and the sample container being releasably located on the female portion, wherein the action of bringing the male and female portion together obtains a biological sample from an animal and tags that animal simultaneously, the sample removal means further providing an amount of sample preparative or preservative for the collected biological sample.

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21. A sampling device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the drawings.
22. A sampling device and tagging system substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the drawings.